



Satellite image with enhanced low cloud-top temperatures (degrees C) for 7:15 a.m. EST (NOAA)

Agricultural Weather Highlights - Wednesday - December 31, 2003

- ***In the West***, heavy rains have ended for the time being in ***southern California***, but saturated soils maintain the potential for mud slides and flooding. Locally heavy showers linger along the coast of ***northern California and Oregon***. Elsewhere, widespread precipitation continues across ***interior portions of the region***, providing some drought relief in the form of high-elevation snowfall.
- ***On the Plains***, unfavorably dry weather persists in the ***central and southern hard red winter wheat areas***, leaving the poorly established crop exposed to potential weather extremes. Additional light snow is falling in winter wheat areas of ***Montana's*** in advance of an approaching Arctic cold front.
- ***In the Corn Belt***, generally mild, sunny, and breezy weather is helping to alleviate excessive wetness for soft red winter wheat in ***eastern and southern growing areas***. Falling snow in the ***upper Midwest*** continues to hamper transportation.
- ***In the South***, dryness prevails, although most winter grains and cool-season pastures are not experiencing significant stress. Favorably drier weather dominates the ***mid-Atlantic and much of New England***.

Outlook: Across the ***East***, a broad area of high pressure will maintain dry, mild weather thru New Year's Day. Meanwhile, light rain will spread from the ***Southwest*** into the ***middle Mississippi Valley and Ohio Valley***. Stormy weather will persist along the ***West Coast*** with more heavy rain and low-elevation snow likely across the ***Pacific Northwest and California***. During the upcoming weekend, bitterly cold temperatures will begin to filter into the ***northern Rockies and Plains*** as a cold air mass gradually envelops much of the ***central U.S.*** In addition, locally heavy rain may return to the ***Ohio Valley***. The NWS 6- to 10-day outlook for January 5-9, 2004 features near- to below-normal temperatures for much of the ***continental U.S.***, with above-normal temperatures confined to the ***Southwest*** and along the ***Gulf Coast***. Above-normal precipitation is forecast for the ***Mid-Atlantic and Tennessee Valley***. In addition, excessive wetness will persist in ***northern California***. Elsewhere, below-normal precipitation is expected in ***southern Florida, the northern Plains, and Southwest***.

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Web Site: <http://www.usda.gov/oce/waob/jawf/AgWxHighlights/TODAYSWX.PDF>